

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-13. **(Cancelled)**

14. **(Currently amended)** Method of promoting growth [[in]] of an animal, comprising the step of:

feeding the animal with an F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain, wherein the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain is in an amount effective to promote growth [[in]] of the animal.

15. **(Cancelled)**

16. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the step of feeding comprises feeding orally.

17. **(Currently amended)** The method according to claim 16, wherein ~~the step of feeding comprises feeding the said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain is~~ in association with an acceptable carrier, ~~wherein the carrier is~~ selected from the group consisting of a solid feed acceptable carrier, [[or]] a liquid feed acceptable carrier, ~~or combinations and a combination thereof.~~

18. **(Currently amended)** The method according to claim 17, wherein the ~~carrier comprises~~ a solid feed acceptable carrier ~~comprising~~ comprises a common solid feedstuff.

19. **(Currently amended)** The method according to claim 17, wherein the ~~carrier comprises~~ a liquid feed acceptable carrier ~~comprising~~ comprises water.

20. **(Currently amended)** The method according to claim 17, wherein the ~~carrier comprises~~ a liquid feed acceptable carrier ~~comprising~~ comprises milk.

21. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the effective amount is at least about 5×10^7 CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.
22. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the effective amount ranges from about 5×10^7 to about 5×10^9 CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.
23. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain consists of the *Escherichia coli* strain deposited at the International Depository Authority of Canada (IDAC) on January 21, 2005 under accession number IDAC 210105-01, mutants or variants thereof.
24. **(Currently amended)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the animal is selected from the group consisting of a post-weaning animal, a post-hatching animal, and combinations a combination thereof.
25. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning animal aged from about 10 to about 28 days old.
26. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-hatching animal aged from about 1 to about 7 days old.
27. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning pig.
28. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning mouse.
29. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-hatching poultry animal.
30. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 29, wherein the poultry animal is a chicken.

31-39. **(Cancelled)**

40. **(New)** The method according to claim 14, wherein said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain promotes daily weight gain.
41. **(New)** The method according to claim 14, wherein said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain promotes weight gain while reducing feed intake.
42. **(New)** The method according to claim 14, wherein said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain is fed to the animal during the animal's growth phase and reduces the delay required for the animal to attain a desired weight.